Improvement in quality of drinking water

722. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that inspite of sincere efforts by the Central Government, the States have not improved the quality of drinking water;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether guidelines issued by Government to States for routine analysis of samples for physio-chemicals and microbial quality are not being followed by States; and

(d) if so, the remedial steps being taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) No, Sir. 96.13% of the 14,22,303 rural habitations in the country have been fully covered, and 3.55% partially covered with safe drinking water supply as per the stipulated norms.

(b) Due to overexploitation of groundwater and other factors, some of the drinking water sources become chemically contaminated and unsafe. The number of water quality affected habitations in the country as on 31.3.2004, as reported by State Governments in response to water quality survey ordered in March, 2000 is 2,16,968.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The quality of drinking water of various sources is periodically monitored by the District Water Quality Testing Laboratories set up by States and other available laboratories with reference to the water quality standards laid down by the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) as per IS:10500 standard. A community based rural drinking water monitoring and surveillance programme has also been pilot-tested in four districts of the country for scaling up throughout the country.

Depletion of ground water level

723. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
PROF. R.B.S. VARMA:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of the marked depletion in ground water level in